

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	West Fork Berry Creek Limited Access Timber Sale
Proposed Implementation Date:	April 28, 2008
Proponent:	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Bozeman Unit
Location:	Section 16 T1S-R19E
County:	Stillwater

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

- The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Bozeman Unit has been presented with a limited access timber harvest opportunity from Rimrock Timber Inc. for Section 16 T1S-R19E (West Fork Berry Creek) located in Stillwater County, MT. The proposed project would consist of an overstory removal and small (< 1 acre) group selection harvest treatments over an estimated 200 acres of Ponderosa Pine timber yielding an estimated minimum net volume of 1,100 tons (150 Mbf) of sawlog volume and 2000 tons of pulp logs. Treatment would consist of harvesting (sawlogs and pulp logs) an average of 1,500 to 2,000 board feet per acre. This proposed project would generate estimated minimum revenue of \$13,600 for the Montana State School Trust (Common Schools).

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Contact with the lessee (Margaret Holmgren/Scott Purdum) was made notifying her of the proposed timber sale project on 4/3/2008.

No other public review was conducted for this limited access timber Sale.

Montana Natural Heritage Program request for species of concern input was submitted on March 18, 2008.

DNRC Specialist review was called for on March 18, 2008. Project proposal description and request for input were distributed to: Ross Baty, Wildlife Biologist; Jim Bower, Fisheries Program Specialist; Jeff Schmalenberg, Soil Scientist; Donna Riebe, Programmer/Analyst; Patrick Rennie, Archaeologist; Gary Frank, Resource Management Supervisor; Sonya Germann, Forest Management Planner; Jordan Lawson, Resource Economist; Jane Markland, Program Specialist; Mike O'Herron, Planning Section Supervisor; Tim Spoelma, Silviculturalist.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

In accordance with Rule 36.11.445 (c) WEED MANAGEMENT section of the DNRC's Montana Administrative Rules for Forest Management a Weed Control Management Plan for the proposed project will be submitted to the Stillwater County Weed Board.

Temporary Road Use Agreements between Ron and Dorothy Olson and Margaret Holmgren and the proponent of the Limited Access proposal (Rimrock Timber Inc.) verifying access for hauling of State timber are on file at the Bozeman Unit.

A Stillwater County Burning Permit would be required for the burning of slash piles (2008/09).

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative – Harvest a minimum of 1,100 tons (~ 150 Mbf) of sawlogs and 2,000 tons of pulp logs from the Ponderosa Pine stand over an estimated 200 acres of State ownership. This is a limited access opportunity for treatment.

No Action Alternative – Timber harvest would not be initiated and an opportunity to manage for forest health would not be realized. No revenue from the selected treatment area would be generated to the State.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i>

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Soils are well drained and have a low to moderate erosion potential on the more 15-35% slopes. The site has a long season of use and the moderate slopes are suitable for ground operations.

Where available and appropriate, focus to retain and distribute a minimal amount (up to 10 tons/acre) of 3 inch and larger Course Woody Debris (CWD) on site would be made.

Distribution of a light slash layer and the application of grass seed to all portions of exposed/disturbed skid trails would be the mitigation measures for any possible erosion along those routes.

Weeds would be monitored for treatment and dealt with on a case by case basis with the lessee. (see attached, Weed Control Management Plan)

The proposed project would not result in direct, in-direct or cumulative effects, based on the project design and some retention of woody debris on-site.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

None.

There are no active streams on the site. Drainages are ephemeral or Class 3 with rare delivery to any other body of water.

No harvest activities from within the drainages are planned and only designated/approved crossings would be developed to access isolated stands of merchantable volume. Appropriate SMZ boundaries would coincide with the treatment area boundaries and the SMZ rules applied accordingly.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

No unacceptable impacts expected.

Some particulate/smoke would be created during the burning of piles.

Burning would take place in conjunction with burning of piles on the adjacent private ownership.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

None

Discussion:

Species is predominantly Ponderosa Pine. An overstory removal harvest treatment of Ponderosa Pine to remove a low volume per acre removal of available merchantable volume would likely stimulate the growth of the well established multi-storied stand. Any openings created by this design would not likely exceed 1 acre. No slopes greater than 30% would be operated on. Harvest would be conducted on dry ground by conventional skidding methods (rubber tired skidder).

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

No unacceptable impacts expected.

Due to size, duration and magnitude of the proposed project no cumulative effects on wildlife or birds.

There are no fisheries issues within the proposed project area. Per Jim Bower, DNRC Fisheries Program Specialist, 3/20/08. On file in the Project File at the Bozeman Unit.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

None. Per input received from the Montana Natural Heritage Program on 3/17/2008. On file in the Project File at the Bozeman Unit.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

None. Per Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archaeologist, 3/19/08. On file in the Project File at the Bozeman Unit.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

None.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

None.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

Grazing is leased to Scott Purdum (C/O Margaret Holmgren), 117 AUM's on 640 acres, Lease #3383.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.• Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.• Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No unacceptable impacts expected.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

None

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

People are currently employed in the wood products industry. Due to the relatively small size of the timber sale program, there will be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

People are currently paying taxes from the wood products industry in the region. Due to the relatively small size of the timber sale program, there will be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on tax revenues.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There will be no measurable cumulative impacts related to demand for government services due to the small size of the timber sale program, the short-term impacts to traffic, the small possibility of a few people temporarily relocating to the area, and the lack of other timber sales in the adjacent area.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

In March 2003, the DNRC adopted the Administrative Rules for Forest Management, applicable to forest management activities on all forested state trust lands administered by the department.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

No impacts expected.

There is no public road access provided to this portion of State ownership.

The State section is included in the Block Management Program administered by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

There will be no measurable cumulative impacts related to population and housing due to the relatively small size of the timber sale program, and the fact that people are already employed in this occupation in the region.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

None

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

None

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Curt Tesmer	Date: April 3, 2008
	Title: Bozeman Unit Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative – Harvest a minimum of 1,100 tons (~ 150 Mbf) of sawlogs and 2,000 tons of pulp logs from the Ponderosa Pine stand over an estimated 200 acres of State ownership.

Action alternative is selected based on the objectives of the proposal, the low risk of impacts associated with the proposed project and the size and magnitude of the harvest proposal.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

None anticipated.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

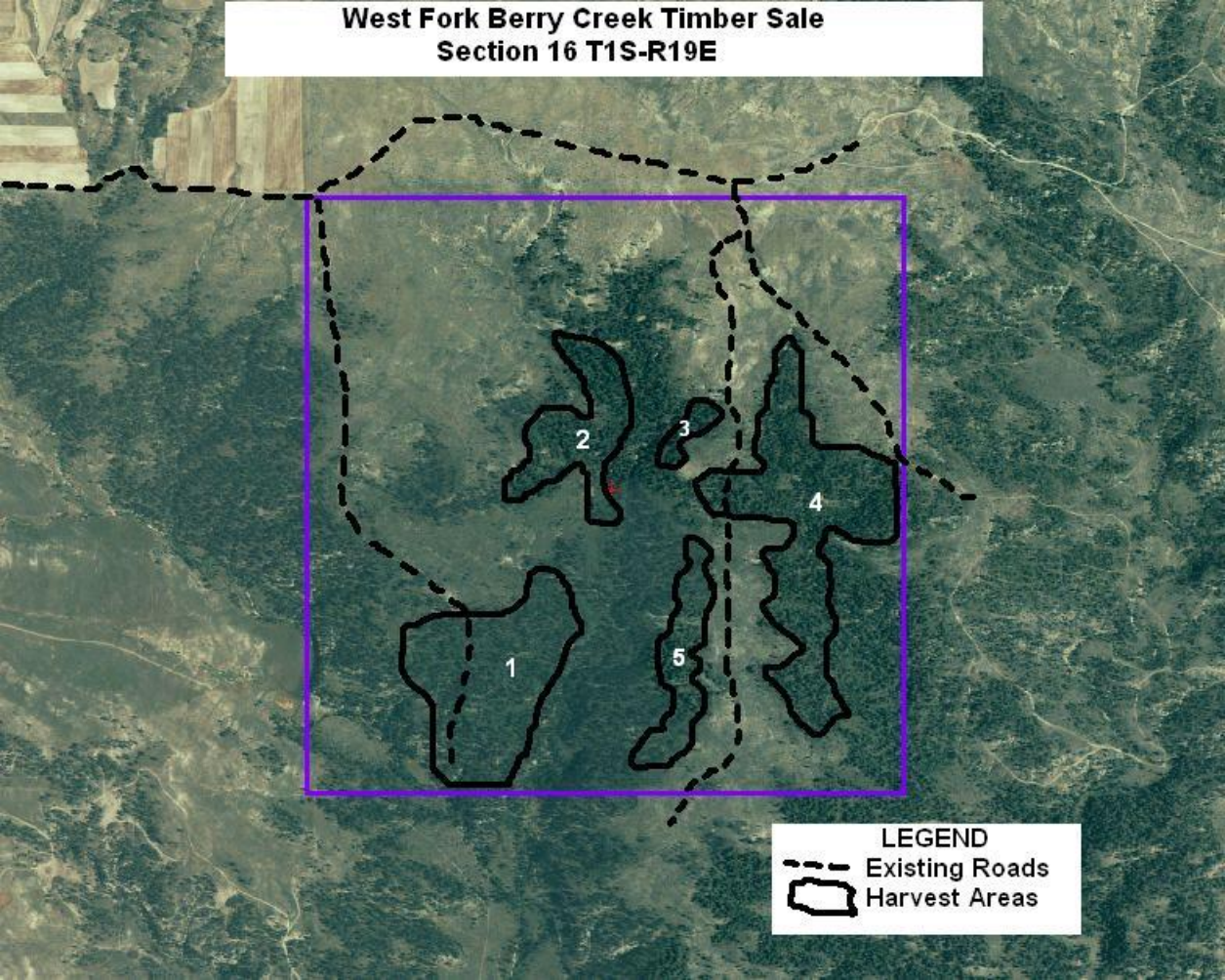
☐ EIS ☐ More Detailed EA ☒ No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Craig Campbell
	Title: Bozeman Unit Manager
Signature: /s/ Craig Campbell	Date: April 4, 2008

ATTACHMENTS

West Fork Berry Creek Timber Sale Proposal Vicinity Map
West Fork Berry Creek Timber Sale Map/Photo
West Fork Berry Creek Weed Control Management Plan (C.Tesmer 4/3/2008)

**West Fork Berry Creek Timber Sale
Section 16 T1S-R19E**



LEGEND

 Existing Roads

 Harvest Areas